

REMARKS

This paper is in response to the official action dated May 17, 2007, wherein claims 1-20 were pending and rejected as obvious.

Reconsideration of the application as amended is solicited.

The issues raised in the above-identified official action will be addressed in the order appearing therein.

DRAWING OBJECTIONS

The drawings stand objected to under 37 CFR 1.83(a) as failing to show the following features recited in the claims: at least one seal, as recited in claims 3 and 13; wherein the seal comprises an O-ring, as recited in claims 4 and 14; a securing element, as recited in claims 5 and 16; wherein the securing element comprises a hose clamp, as recited in claims 9 and 17; a cooking appliance, as recited in claims 8 and 20; and first and second seals, as recited in claims 10 and 15.

Applicants submit herewith three replacement drawing sheets, including changes to Figures 1, 2, and 3. Figures 1 and 2 have been amended to depict a securing element 12, which constitutes a hose clamp, and first and second seals 14a, 14b, which constitute O-rings. Support for these amendments may be found at paragraphs [0029] and [0031] of the specification. Figure 3 has been amended to depict an appliance such as a shower 100 or cooking appliance 200. Support for this amendment may be found at paragraph [0037] of the specification, for example.

In accordance with the drawing changes, paragraphs [0029], [0030], and [0037] of the specification are amended herein to include the appropriate reference characters.

No new matter has been added.

Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of these drawing objections.

CLAIM AMENDMENTS

Pursuant to the examiner's recommendation, applicants have amended claim 1 to more particularly point out and distinctly recite a hand-held sprayer comprising, in part, a

shaft section and “a fastening element plugable through at least one opening from the outside of the shaft section into the shaft section...”

CLAIM REJECTIONS

Claims 1-20 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as obvious over Williams (U.S. Patent No. 4,171,169), in view of Porta et al. (U.S. Patent No. 3,973,791). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection. Reconsideration is requested.

Neither Williams nor Porta Discloses “A Third Mounting Extension”

Each of independent claims 1 and 11 recites, in part, a shaft section and a connecting plug element, where the connecting plug element comprises a second mounting extension mounted to a third mounting extension of the shaft section. The action has relied solely on Porta et al. as disclosing a “second mounting extension [that] has the shape of a hollow tube that can be mounted to a third mounting extension (50, 54) in the shaft section...” Thus, the action states that the region where the reference numbers 50 and 54 are located in Fig. 3 of Porta et al. reasonably read on the “third mounting extension” recited in claims 1 and 11.

A person having ordinary skill in the art would understand that the “third mounting extension” constitutes something that “extends” from the shaft portion such that the connecting plug element can be mounted thereto. An extension is created by adding material to an object and, by definition, must “extend” from that object. This understanding is supported by the specification, which states that “[t]he second mounting extension 7 is preferably formed of a hollow tube that can be mounted on a corresponding third mounting extension 8 of hand-held sprayer 1. The mounting extension 8 of hand-held sprayer 1 can assume the form of a connector, for example.” Paragraph [0030]. The second mounting extension 7 can only be mounted “on” the third mounting extension 8, if the third mounting extension 8 actually “extends” from the shaft section.

Elements 50 and 54 of Porta et al. do not constitute a mounting extension, as no aspect of the elements 50, 54 “extends” from the female coupling member 14. On the contrary, elements 50 and 54 are bores defined within the female coupling member 14. A bore is created by removing material from an object and thus, cannot constitute an “extension” from that object.

Moreover, if the region where the reference numerals 50 and 54 are located is read as constituting an “extension,” this reading can only be understood as being limited to the shoulder or step-shaped portions between the bores 50 and 54. However, as illustrated in Fig. 5, for example, the male member 12 does not even contact this region and, as such, cannot be “mounted to” it, as recited in claims 1 and 11.

Therefore, applicants respectfully assert that neither Williams nor Porta et al., alone or in combination, discloses each and every feature recited in claims 1 and 11.

Combination of Williams and Porta et al. is Improper

Moreover, the combination of Williams and Porta et al. involves impermissible hindsight reasoning derived from the applicant’s own disclosure and, therefore, the obviousness rejections are improper and should be withdrawn. MPEP §2145.

Williams discloses a hand-held sprayer and a conventional fluid coupling 32 that connects the sprayer to a hose extension 26. Williams describes that the coupling 32 is connected to threads 52 in a conventional manner. Therefore, Fig. 3 illustrates the coupling 32 as including a threaded device that at least partially compresses a portion of the hose extension 26 to seal the hose extension 26 against the body 20 of the sprayer 1. Such a connection is not a quick connect type connection.

Nevertheless, the action alleges that “Williams further discloses that the conventional fluid coupling (32) [connecting the hose extension 26 to the sprayer 1] is ‘preferably being of the quick connect type’ (see column 3, lines 25-26).” The action seems to assert that Williams provides some suggestion, or motivation, to modify the coupling 32 at the back of the hand-held sprayer 1 to include the quick connect type of device disclosed by Porta et al. The applicant respectfully asserts that the action misapprehends the teachings of Williams.

While Williams has been accurately quoted, the action ignores the remainder of the sentence, which states that it is the coupling between the hose and the faucet depicted in Fig. 1 that may be a quick connect type coupling, not the coupling between the hose and the sprayer. Specifically, with reference only to Fig. 1, the remainder of the sentence states “...the coupling 32 preferably being of the quick connect type [is] to enable the washer to quickly and conveniently be connected and disconnected with and from **the faucet**.” Fig. 1 identifies the coupling between the hose 26 and the faucet with reference numeral 32. Thus,

one could only read this description as suggesting that the coupling between the hose and the faucet may be constructed as including a quick connect type coupling. Williams makes no suggestion that the coupling between the hose and the sprayer, which is identified by reference numeral 30 in Fig. 1 and, confusingly, reference numeral 32 in Fig. 3, may be constructed as a quick connect type coupling. Thus, any suggestion, or motivation, to modify the sprayer of Williams to include a quick connect type coupling between the hose and the sprayer, as recited in the claims of the present application, must have been derived from applicants' own disclosure, thereby resulting in impermissible hindsight.

Moreover, by teaching a device with a fixed compressive coupling between the hose and the sprayer, Williams in fact teaches away from being modified to include the quick connect coupling disclosed by Porta et al.

Furthermore, the applicant submits that a person having ordinary skill in the art would not otherwise have combined the teaching of Williams and Porta et al. to reach the subject matter of the present invention because one aspect of the present invention is to provide a hand-held sprayer that can be repeatedly detached from and re-attached to a hose. In contrast, the coupling device disclosed by Porta et al. is not intended to be repeatedly detachable. Rather, as stated in claim 1 of Porta et al., when at least a proportion of a burst pressure is reached, the first coupling member may not be able to be slidably received by the first and second bores. Accordingly, under certain circumstances, the coupling device of Porta et al. is not repeatedly detachable and, thus, would not adequately serve the purposes of the invention.

For the foregoing reasons, claims 1 and 11 of the present application are novel and non-obvious over the references of record and, therefore, in condition for allowance. Moreover, each of the remaining claims are in condition for allowance as being dependent on allowable base claims.

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the obviousness rejections is respectfully requested.

OFFICIAL NOTICE

With respect to claims 3, 4, 10, and 13-15 the examiner has taken official notice of providing a seal between a hose extension and a first mounting extension of a connecting

plug element. Specifically, the action states "that it is old and well known in the art to place at least one sealing element between two intimately connected fluid conveying conduit members in order to assure that fluid does not leak from the connection."

The applicant respectfully traverses this taking of official notice.

While it may be well known to provide a seal between other components of a hydraulic system, it is not old and well-known to provide such a seal between a hose extension and a connection plug element. Rather, as evidenced by both Williams and Porta et al., it is old and well known to provide a connecting plug element with ribs, for example, between which the hose extension may be compressed to assure that fluid does not leak from the connection.

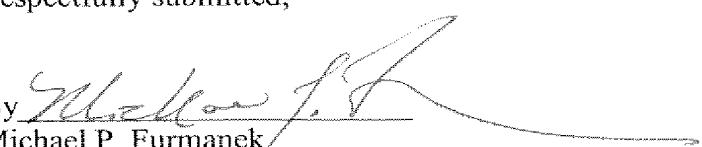
Accordingly, this official notice is respectfully traversed, and applicants request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections of claims 3, 4, 10, and 13-15.

CONCLUSION

In light of the foregoing, the applicant submits that each of the outstanding rejections, objections, and other concerns has been overcome. Therefore, the present application is in condition for allowance. If there are any additional issues that the examiner believes may be remedied via telephone conference, kindly contact the undersigned at (312) 474-6300.

Respectfully submitted,

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